

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

Good afternoon, my name is Rosa Ericka Salvatierra, I am representing my group Colectivo de Defensa de Hartford (Hartford Deportation Defense). I am from Guatemala, and have 2 children who are also from Guatemala. My son is 8 years old and my daughter is 4. We have been in this country for 2 and a half years. I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

With my children it's been hard because when I take them to the doctor, they ask me for paystubs to give me a discount and sometimes they get to a point where they won't see them if I don't pay the full amount owed.

In my case, 2 weeks ago I had an ultrasound done and had to pay in cash but they won't give me the results until I renew the financial discount paperwork with the clinic's social worker. For this I need a letter from my employer and that has been hard to get.

For the children and also for us adults it is important to have health insurance.

We can't go to the doctor because of the worry of it costing too much money. One time I had to go to an emergency clinic and then I got a bill for \$500 for a single visit. Another time I had to take the kids to the emergency room and got a \$700 bill for each of them. Another time, my husband got punched by somebody on the street and the ambulance came and then sent us a bill for \$2000.

We know that last year we made some progress, but it is not enough. I worry when I think of my son who is 8 years old and, by the time the new law goes into effect next year, he will be 9 years old and won't have access to the benefits. Why did you decide to leave children 9 years and up out, when all children should be treated equally and are worthy of care?

This is why we need your support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Our health is the most important thing. Without our health we cannot work and provide for our family.

Ericka Salvatierra